

# Building Pyramids

Ancient Egyptian kings are best known for the huge structures they built called pyramids. These large stone buildings served as houses or tombs for the dead. The Egyptians believed that kings, or pharaohs, remained gods even after death, and that pyramids were their palaces. Kings were buried with their possessions. The Egyptians thought that kings took their possessions with them to the afterlife or the life that continued after death. **STOP**



Because the afterlife was more important than life on earth, the Egyptians took great care in preparing kings for burial. They believed the bodies of the pharaohs needed to be preserved. They used a process called mummification. **STOP** Mummification took 70 days. First, the Egyptians removed all organs except the heart from the body. Then they rubbed oils and perfumes over the body. Next, they wrapped the body in linen bandages. Finally, the mummy, or preserved body, was placed in a coffin and put into a tomb. **STOP**

Archaeologists and historians estimate that some pyramids took about 20 years to build and that slave labor was not used. When the Nile River was flooding, farmers could not work in their fields. They were then available to work on a pyramid. **STOP** Perhaps as many as 20,000 workers cut more than two million blocks of heavy stone from cliffs to the south. Then they dragged the stones with rope to ramps that led to the building site.

Building the tombs was important but many people died because the work was difficult and dangerous. Workers labored eight hours every day for ten days in a row. Then they received one day of rest. **STOP** They were paid with food. The pharaohs counted on the tomb builders to be both committed and courageous. Because no one knew how long the pharaoh would live, they had to work quickly and accurately. **STOP**